

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 06801 300246Z
ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0000

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BANGKOK 6801

CHIANG MAI 116 DATED 290649Z MAR 77 SENT TO BANGKOK BEING
REPEATED TO YOU FOR YOUR INFO:

QTE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE CHIANG MAI 116

REF: (A) BANGKOK 6673, (B) BANGKOK 6551, (C) BANGKOK 6091

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, MOPS, TH, PM

SUBJECT: BURMESE SHELLING OF THAI VILLAGE

SUMMARY: TAK GOVERNOR REPORTS THAT 15 WERE KILLED AND
AROUND FIFTY INJURED IN THE BURMESE SHELLING OF BAN WANG
KHA.

1. GOVERNOR KUSON SARNTITHAM TOLD ME IN A VONCERSATION
IN TAK PROVINCE YESTERDAY THAT THERE WERE FITEEN CONFIRMED
DEATHS IN THE BURMESE ARMY SHELLING OF BAN WANG KHA LAST
WEEK. THREE OF THOSE DIED IN THE HOSPITAL, THE OTHER BODIES
WERE FOUND AT THE SCENE. THE GOVERNOR ESTIMATES THAT ABOUT
FIFTY PEOPLE WERE INJURED, THIRTY-FIVE OF THOSE "SERIOUSLY".

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2. BAN WANG KHA WAS NOT MUCH MORE THAN A MARKET PLACE
ON A RIVER BANK, IT'S MAJOR CUSTOMERS, KARENS AND BURMESE
LIVING ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE RIVER. THE GOVERNOR RE-
PORTS THAT TWENTY OR MORE SHELLS FELL INTO THE MARKET AREA
COMPLETELY DESTROYING IT. OF THOSE KILLED, THE GOVERNOR
ESTIMATES THAT "ONLY FOUR OR FIVE" WERE ETHNIC THAI.
THE REST WERE KAREN, MON, AND BURMESE.

3. LOOKING AT A MAP OF THE AREA AND THE PICTURES OF THE DESTRUCTION, IT IS EASY TO UNDERSTAND HOW AN ARTILLERY BARRAGE COULD OVERFLY THE TARGET BY ABOUT TWO HUNDRED YARDS AND FALL ON THE THAI SIDE OF THE RIVER. IN THE GOVERNOR'S PICTURES OF THE DESTRUCTION, THE BUILDINGS THAT WERE SUPPOSEDLY THE TARGET ARE CLEARLY VISIBLE IN THE BACKGROUND, STILL STANDING. HOWEVER THE GOVERNOR, AS WELL AS OTHER SOURCES WITH WHOM WE TALKED, REPORT THAT MOST PEOPLE IN TAK BELIEVE THE ATTACK WAS DELIBERATE. EVEN SO, THE DESTRUCTION OF BAN WANG KHA DOES NOT APPEAR TO HAVE SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED ANTI-BURMESE SENTIMENT IN THE AREA. SUCH ANTI-BURMESE SENTIMENT IS ALREADY SO STRONG THAT THE INCIDENT ONLY SERVED TO REENFORCE PREVAILING SENTIMENT.

4. ON SATURDAY, THE THAI MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS TRAVELED TO TAK FOR AN ONSITE INVESTIGATION OF THE DAMAGE. HOWEVER, HE NEVER MADE IT TO MAE SOT AS THE ATTEMPTED COUP FORCED HIS IMMEDIATE RETURN TO BANGKOK.

TANNER

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